

GROWING OUR **FUTURE**

A Community Action Plan for Agricultural Economic Vitality in Nevada County

WHAT THE PLAN IS

The Action Plan is a **practical, working guide** to help Nevada County move from ideas to implementation. It is designed to be used by:

- The Agricultural Economic Vitality Roundtable
- County staff and partner organizations
- Farmers, ranchers, and producers
- Funders and community partners

It provides a shared framework for coordinating efforts, aligning investments, and advancing priority actions.

WHAT THE PLAN IS NOT

It is not:

- A regulatory document
- A static report that sits on a shelf

Instead, it is a living tool—intended to be revisited, refined, and updated as conditions change and new opportunities emerge.

HOW TO USE THE ACTION PLAN

Think of the Plan as a playbook for collaboration—one that helps answer **four key questions**:

- 1** *Where do we start?*
Which actions will deliver the greatest impact and build momentum?
- 2** *Who leads?*
Who is responsible, and who needs to be at the table?
- 3** *How do we move forward together?*
How do we align funding, partnerships, and implementation?
- 4** *How do we measure progress?*
What does success look like, and how do we track it over time?

HOW THE PLAN WORKS

This Plan is designed to support **ongoing coordination and action**, led by the Roundtable.

- Actions are prioritized and sequenced
- Leadership roles are clearly identified
- Progress is tracked and updated annually
- New actions can be added as needed



THE 9 KEY MOVES

The Action Plan is organized into three categories that reflect different levels of effort, timing, and impact:



QUICK WINS

Start now. Build momentum.

High-impact actions that can be launched quickly using existing capacity and partnerships. These establish early progress and build the coordination structure needed for larger efforts.



BOLD MOVES

Think big. Build long-term impact.

Core strategies that strengthen Nevada County's agricultural economy at a systems level. These require sustained collaboration and investment, but deliver the greatest long-term benefit.



SUPPORTING ACTIONS

Fill gaps. Strengthen the system.

Targeted actions that reinforce both Quick Wins and Bold Moves by addressing critical needs such as:

- Land access
- Workforce pathways
- Processing capacity
- Market visibility
- Funding coordination

HOW THE ACTIONS WORK TOGETHER.

These actions are not independent—they are designed to function as an integrated system.

- Quick Wins build early traction
- Bold Moves create long-term structural change
- Supporting Actions ensure the system functions and endures
- Together, they create a balanced approach that delivers near-term progress while building lasting economic resilience.

**THIS IS A PLAN
DESIGNED TO BE USED—
BY THE COMMUNITY, FOR
THE COMMUNITY—TO
GROW A MORE RESILIENT
AND CONNECTED
AGRICULTURAL ECONOMY
IN NEVADA COUNTY.**

THE 9 KEY MOVES

Quick Wins, Bold Moves & Supporting Actions



QUICK WINS

1 Launch the Agricultural Economic Vitality Roundtable + AEP

Establish a countywide Roundtable to coordinate partners, align resources, and lead implementation of this Action Plan. The Roundtable will oversee the Agricultural Enterprise Program (AEP), including a shared funding strategy to pursue priority grants and investment aligned with agricultural economic vitality.

Lead: Nevada County RCD & Economic Development (initial conveners), Roundtable (shared governance)

Value Chain: Land management, access, production, aggregation, distribution, value-add

2 Launch the Sierra Nevada Farmer Cooperative (SNFC)

Build on existing momentum to establish a regional cooperative and food hub for aggregation, distribution, and collaborative sales. Initial steps include business planning, securing funding and facility space, and evaluating value-added processing opportunities. Coordinate with public agencies to expand institutional purchasing through local preference policies.

Lead: Sierra Harvest

Value Chain: Aggregation, distribution, value-add, markets/sales, enterprise viability



BOLD MOVES

3 Stabilize the County's Working Lands Base

Develop a "Significant Agricultural Resource Lands" map to guide conservation and economic strategy. Use tools such as Forever Farms and Evergreen Leases to protect and aggregate at-risk small farms, aligning land conservation, housing, and economic incentives to sustain long-term agricultural production.

Lead: Bear Yuba Land Trust + Roundtable

Value Chain: Land management, land access, production, enterprise viability

4 Advance Regional Meat Processing + Workforce Pathways

Develop a multi-species, shared-use meat processing facility at the District Ranch to address regional processing gaps. Pair infrastructure with hands-on training programs to build workforce capacity in meat processing, food safety, and value-added production.

Lead: District Ranch (NJUHSD)

Value Chain: Infrastructure, value-add processing, markets, workforce pathways





SUPPORTING ACTIONS

5 Strengthen Farm Succession + Land Access

Expand participation in conservation programs (e.g., Williamson Act) through outreach and education. Establish a countywide succession support network connecting landowners, retiring farmers, and new producers with legal, financial, and land access resources.

Lead: Bear Yuba Land Trust + Roundtable

Value Chain: Land access, production, enterprise viability

6 Expand Value-Added Processing Capacity

Conduct a needs assessment to identify gaps in value-added processing infrastructure. Identify priority facility types, potential sites, and incentives to support development, aligned with producer capacity and market demand.

Lead: Nevada County Economic Development + Roundtable (transition to SNFC)

Value Chain: Value-add, aggregation, distribution, markets/sales, enterprise viability

7 Strengthen Regional Market Access + Branding

Develop a coordinated marketing strategy to promote Nevada County agriculture, expand agritourism, and increase direct-to-consumer and institutional sales. Establish a shared countywide brand and strengthen connections between western and eastern county markets.

Lead: Sierra Harvest

Value Chain: Distribution, markets/sales, aggregation, enterprise viability

8 Build Community Connection to Agriculture

Expand education and outreach programs to increase public awareness and support for local agriculture. Launch a “Know Your Farmer and Rancher, Know Your Food” campaign to strengthen community connection and long-term demand.

Lead: Sierra Harvest

Value Chain: Consumer demand, cultural support, enterprise viability

9 Coordinate Strategic Funding

Develop and maintain a coordinated funding strategy through the Roundtable and AEP. Pursue multi-benefit funding opportunities that align agriculture with land conservation, water, wildfire resilience, and regional food systems.

Lead: Roundtable / AEP Coordination Team

Value Chain: Full value chain support